



1 s.h. Elective Courses For MD Students

(updated 08/11/2026)

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MED:8021 Community Health Outreach 1

Faculty: David Asprey, Ph.D., PA-C
david-asprey@uiowa.edu

Offered: Fall

Administrative Contact: Cody Pritchard, M.S.Ed.
319-384-1725
cody-pritchard@uiowa.edu

Max Enrollment: 16

Special Conditions: Application required

Community Health Outreach (CHO) is a student-led, discussion-based elective focused on the healthcare professional's role in community health. Discussions will center on a variety of topics including healthcare systems, health equity, marginalized populations, and effective and sustainable outreach practices. Students will also discuss and consider avenues for community involvement available both during student years and throughout their medical careers. Students involved in CHO will have opportunities to engage with the community around them and learn from experts in their respective medical and non-medical fields. CHO I is facilitated by two M2/PA2 student facilitators who were previous CHO participants.

Course Objectives

1. Establish a foundation for students to pursue their interest in, widen their perspective on and explore the nuances of community health in order to help them build upon and integrate these interests in their future careers.
2. Cultivate trust and camaraderie among students to foster an environment that encourages an open process of learning, allowing for mistakes and promoting reasoned discussion.
3. Support student engagement with community health both directly through volunteer experiences and more broadly through education about and access to advocacy.
4. Learn about local community resources and encourage students to share these resources with peers and future patients.

Additional Course Information

CHO I roster selection is completed over the pre-M1/PA1 summer.

Offering Details: Full semester; Wednesday, 12:00 – 12:50 pm

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: None

Registration contact: Cody Pritchard, cody-pritchard@uiowa.edu

MED:8022 Community Health Outreach 2

Faculty: David Asprey, Ph.D., PA-C
david-asprey@uiowa.edu

Offered: Spring

Administrative Contact: Cody Pritchard, M.S.Ed.
319-384-1725
cody-pritchard@uiowa.edu

Max Enrollment: 16

Special Conditions: MED:8021 CHO I

Community Health Outreach (CHO) is a student-led, discussion-based elective focused on the healthcare professional's role in community health. Discussions will center on a variety of topics including healthcare systems, health equity, marginalized populations, and effective and sustainable outreach practices. Students will also discuss and consider avenues for community involvement available both during student years and throughout their medical careers. Students involved in CHO will have opportunities to engage with the community around them and learn from experts in their respective medical and non-medical fields. M1/PA1 CHO II participants will each lead a week of class. Students will identify the topic and coordinate community guest speakers.

Course Objectives

1. Establish a foundation for students to pursue their interest in, widen their perspective on and explore the nuances of community health in order to help them build upon and integrate these interests in their future careers.
2. Cultivate trust and camaraderie among students to foster an environment that encourages an open process of learning, allowing for mistakes and promoting reasoned discussion.
3. Support student engagement with community health both directly through volunteer experiences and more broadly through education about and access to advocacy.
4. Learn about local community resources and encourage students to share these resources with peers and future patients.

Additional Course Information

Prerequisite: CHO I

Offering Details: Full semester; Wednesday, 12:00 – 12:50 pm

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: None

Registration contact: Cody Pritchard, cody-pritchard@uiowa.edu

MED:8023 Community Health Outreach 3

Faculty: David Asprey, Ph.D., PA-C
david-asprey@uiowa.edu

Offered: Fall and/or Spring

Administrative Contact: Cody Pritchard, M.S.Ed.
319-384-1725
cody-pritchard@uiowa.edu

Max Enrollment: 16

Special Conditions: Grading is PASS/FAIL only
MED:8021 CHO I and MED:8022
CHO II

Building upon CHO I and II, CHO III students will identify a project that would benefit a community organization, partnering with the chosen organization. Students may work individually or with a partner for this project. Each student will receive 2 hours of credit for a completed project, presentation, and reflection paper. Students are encouraged to reflect on concepts, topics, and speakers highlighted in CHO I and II for inspiration but are not bound to course topics.

Course Objectives

1. Identify a community need in collaboration with partner organization(s) that addresses community healthcare issues, which can include social determinants of health
2. Design and implement a project addressing identified community healthcare need
3. Support student engagement with community health both directly through volunteer experiences and more broadly through education about and access to advocacy.
4. Learn about local community resources and encourage students to share these resources with peers and future patients.

Additional Course Information

Prerequisite: CHO I and CHO II

Offering Details: No class meeting; individually arranged project coaching

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: None

Registration contact: Cody Pritchard, cody-pritchard@uiowa.edu

MED:8031 Reproductive and Gynecological Health Seminar

Faculty: Sarah Shaffer, DO, MME
sarah-shaffer@uiowa.edu

Offered: Fall

Annah Vollstedt, MD
annah-vollstedt@uiowa.edu

Administrative Sally Fisher
Contact: 319-384-8654
sally-fisher@uiowa.edu

Max 35
Enrollment:

Special Grading is PASS/FAIL; only M1/M2
Conditions: students may enroll.

This is a 1-semester hour elective for pre-clinical students that will foster interest in reproductive and gynecological health by providing education on topics in this area as well as service opportunities and mentorship. The education portion of this course will aim to allow students to explore aspects of women's health from both clinical and social perspectives. Students will gain an understanding of the importance of reproductive and gynecological health in general clinical practice and obtain skills specific to the evaluation of patients. This course will complement topics covered in Medicine and Society (MAS), Clinical and Professional Skills (CAPS), and Mechanisms of Health and Disease (MOHD) courses by offering parallel, but focused, women's health topics with educational components including clinical knowledge, physical exam skills, and social determinants of health. Additionally, students will have opportunities for community service that will give them valuable experience with organizations and groups that provide services to this population of patients. Mentorship will be available throughout the course as students interact with faculty and residents who can help them pursue their research or service interests.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, a student will be able to:

1. Identify how healthcare is uniquely different for women compared to the general population. (MK03 – PR02)
2. Discuss the impact of social determinants of health on women's health outcomes. (ICS02 – SBP01 – PR02)
3. Participate in interdisciplinary medicine to deliver high-quality healthcare to women. (ICS01 – SBP02 – PR01 – PR03)
4. Understand presentation, work-up, and treatment of common conditions seen in Obstetrics, Gynecology, related sub-specialties, and primary care fields that provide healthcare to women. (MK03)
5. Practice communication and examination skills are pertinent to providing health care to women. (ICS02 – PR01)

Additional Course Information

Offering Details: This 1-semester elective will meet over the noon hour (12-12:50) weekly on Mondays.

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: N/A

Registration contact: Sally Fisher, Administrative Services Coordinator, 319-384-8654

MED:8033 Clinical Skills for Responding to Sexual Violence

Faculty: Jill Endres, MD MS
Jill-endres@uiowa.edu

Offered: Fall

Max 15
Enrollment:

Special Grading is PASS/FAIL only
Conditions:

This course focuses on preparing students to engage with patients with a known or suspected history of sexual trauma. In the first half of the course, students will learn about the prevalence of sexual violence, consensual versus assaultive sex, risk factors for victimization/perpetration, signs and symptoms suggesting a trauma history, barriers to disclosure, biological processes underlying trauma responses, and trauma-informed care. In the second half, students will learn about clinical presentations of patients with acute or remote histories of sexual trauma, associated health concerns, and the multidisciplinary approaches to treatment and management. Classroom activities will take the form of traditional lectures, reading/writing/discussion sessions, a simulated patient (SP) session, and a special 2 documentary screening followed by a discussion with a guest speaker. In particular, the SP session will give students the opportunity to apply their developing knowledge and skills to clinically relevant case scenarios involving health concerns due to sexual violence. In addition, students will gain unique insights into, and develop key contacts with, community partners and support resources serving victims and survivors of sexual violence in the Iowa City/Johnson County areas. By the end of the course, students will have the advanced ability to interact sensitively and appropriately with patients with a history of sexual trauma, communicate with them in a trauma-informed manner, connect them to the resources that exist to support them, and advocate for them as members of the healthcare team.

Note: Given the sensitive nature of the course subject, students are encouraged to seek support as they engage with some of the more psychologically and emotionally challenging content of the course. Students will be reminded at regular intervals of the counseling resources available and to reach out to the course directors and/or teaching assistant with questions, feedback, or concerns. Please see Appendix B for counseling resources for UI students.

Course Objectives

The following objectives were adapted from the core competencies identified by the Academy on Violence and Abuse (AVA) and American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP).^{10,11} At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate an understanding of sexual violence (SBP01) (MK01-03)

- o Understand the definitions of key terms related to sexual violence (e.g., consent)
- o Understand the dynamics of sexual violence and healthy/unhealthy sexual behavior
- o Describe the epidemiology of sexual violence in general and sub-populations
- o Acknowledge pre-existing values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and emotional responses related to sexual violence

Demonstrate understanding of features suggestive of sexual trauma (PC01) (PC05) (SBP01)

- o Recognize signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with a history of sexual trauma
- o Understand individual, social, institutional, and cultural barriers to help-seeking
- o Demonstrate the ability to sensitively screen for a history of sexual trauma and respect patients' self-determination and preference not to disclose
- o Understand that patient support and empowerment are the main goals of intervention

Demonstrate an understanding of the health concerns and management of patients with a history of sexual trauma (PC01) (SBP01) (SBP02)

- o Respond appropriately to a disclosures of sexual violence
- o Understand the role and functions of a sexual assault response team (SART)
- o Become familiar with the initial physical examination of a victim of sexual assault to identify and address acute or life-threatening injuries and collect forensic evidence
- o Understand the chronic physical and behavioral health effects of sexual violence
- o Understand the anatomy and physiology impacted due to sexual violence
- o Recognize how patient's care may be impacted by their experiences of sexual violence
- o Become familiar with community resources for support, safety, and education
- o Understand Iowa-specific reporting requirements and provided services

Additional Course Information

Offering Details: Fall semester, Monday 5:30-6:30 pm, over 16 weeks beginning mid-August, excluding Labor Day and Thanksgiving Break (in-person and/or remote pending public health recommendations)

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: None

Registration contacts: Cecilia Myers Barrera (cecilia-myers@uiowa.edu)

MED:8070 Writing and Medicine

Faculty: Camille Socarras
camille-socarras@uiowa.edu

Offered: Spring

Administrative Contact: Camille Socarras, 1193 MERF
319-335-1682
camille-socarras@uiowa.edu

This seminar integrates literature, visual art, and creative writing with medical training to cultivate reflection, empathy, and communication skills. Students will engage with a variety of works to practice narrative and reflective writing, examine representations of illness and healing, and consider the cultural and ethical dimensions of care. Through weekly discussions and activities—including narratives, poetry, and art-based observation exercises—students will explore how the humanities can deepen their understanding of themselves, their patients, and the practice of medicine.

Course Objectives

Explore how literature, art, and creative writing illuminate relationships and use these perspectives to develop greater self-awareness, critical thought, and attentiveness.

Additional Course Information

Offering Details: Offered spring semester, meets Wednesdays 12:00 pm

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: Credit toward Humanities Distinction Track

Registration contact: Email instructor

MED:8074 Changing Medicine through Research: The Physician-Scientist Pathway

Faculty: Robert Roghair, MD
robert-roghair@uiowa.edu

Offered: Fall

Administrative Contact: Erin Mullins, MA
319-335-8573
erin-mullins@uiowa.edu

Special Conditions: CCOM students

Changing Medicine through Research: The Physician-Scientist Pathway is a one-credit elective course that introduces medical students to the dynamic career track of the physician-scientist, from initial inquiry to global impact. Students will learn how clinical insights drive scientific discovery and how laboratory findings transform patient care. The curriculum covers novel areas of investigation, dual-training paradigms, early-career development pillars, building competitive residency and fellowship applications, the biomedical funding pipeline, and strategies to overcome common systemic hurdles.

Evaluations:

This course is evaluated on a pass/fail basis. In order to pass, students are expected to:

- Attend a minimum of 85% of class sessions. You are allowed up to two absences. Requests to be excused due to conflicts relating to curricular obligations should be submitted to Erin Mullins for approval. See the Student Handbook for policies regarding attendance. Arrangements for make-up of absences due to curricular conflicts will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Attendance will be taken by sign in sheet at class
- Complete course evaluations by due date.

Course Objectives

- Gain understanding of the communication, organization, administrative, analytic and interpersonal skills that play a key role in research productivity and academic advancement.
- Explore different career pathways in research including community-based, clinical-translational and basic science, as well as peer review and leadership.

Additional Course Information

Offering Details: Meets Tuesday evenings from 5:00 - 5:50 PM in MERF during Fall Semester

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: This course is aligned with the Research Distinction Track but is not required

Registration contact: Erin Mullins erin-mullins@uiowa.edu

MED:8076 Bioethics and Humanities Seminar

Faculty: Lauris Kaldjian, MD, PhD
lauris-kaldjian@uiowa.edu

Offered: Fall Semester Only
15 wks/full semester course

Administrative Contact: Suzanne Streitz, BA
319-678-7719
suzanne-streitz@uiowa.edu

Max Enrollment: 12

Special Conditions: For medical students (permission required for occasional other students); no prerequisites.

This 1-credit course provides an introduction to topics and themes that are central to bioethics and the humanities in the context of medicine. It prioritizes dialogue through weekly small-group discussion of an assigned reading and covers a range of topics, including ethical theory, different approaches to ethical reasoning (principles, virtues, consequences), clinical ethics, professionalism and humanism, moral agency, ethical pluralism, ethics in relation to cultural diversity and global health, historical examples of research abuses, technology and the future, narrative ethics, and the use of stories in medicine. Students are encouraged to discuss the real-world relevance of ideas by applying ethical insights to challenges in clinical care.

Course Objectives

1. Identify key contrasts between ethical approaches based on principles, virtues, and consequences.
2. Recognize the potential of narrative ethics to complement other ethical approaches.
3. Recognize the similarities and differences between ethics, professionalism, and humanism.
4. Identify ways in which ethical pluralism and cultural diversity influence medical practice.
5. Recognize key historical examples of unethical conduct in clinical research.
6. Recognize how stories can enhance ethical and humanistic understanding of illness.
7. Recognize ways in which bioethics and humanities are inter-related and inter-dependent.

Additional Course Information

Offering Details: Fall Semester: full semester course (15 weeks). Meets one hour per week (Mondays from 12:00-1:00 PM)

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: Counts as an activity for the Humanities Distinction Track

Registration contact: Contact course director (lauris-kaldjian@uiowa.edu) or coordinator (suzanne-streitz@uiowa.edu).

MED:8077 Personal Professional Compass

Faculty: Brittany Bettendorf, MD, MFA
brittany-bettendorf@uiowa.edu
Katherine Harris, MD
katherine-i-harris@uiowa.edu
Lauris Kaldjian, MD, PhD
lauris-kaldjian@uiowa.edu

Offered: Longitudinal over 3-4 years

Administrative Contact: Suzanne Streitz, BA
319-678-7719
suzanne-streitz@uiowa.edu

Special Conditions: For medical students;
No prerequisites

The purpose of the Carver College of Medicine Personal-Professional Compass program is to help medical students understand, articulate, and integrate their personal and professional values and goals as they navigate their way through the four years of medical school. This program will promote students' growth as humanistic professionals through written reflections on personal experience, readings from the literature of medicine and the humanities, and ongoing dialogues within a community of peers and mentors. Written reflections will culminate in the capstone project of writing a fourth-year personal statement for residency applications.

Course Objectives

1. To encourage students to integrate their personal and professional values and goals.
2. To encourage students to reflect on and learn from their personal experiences in training.
3. To encourage students toward virtues needed for the humanistic practice of medicine.
4. To facilitate peer and mentor relationships that can enhance personal-professional integration.
5. To prepare students to write an authentic and compelling personal statement for residency applications.

Additional Course Information

Offering Details: For details, see: <https://bioethics.medicine.uiowa.edu/personal-professional-compass-ppc-1-credit-elective-program-ccom>

Grading is Pass/Fail only

Distinction Track: Counts as an activity for the Humanities Distinction Track

Registration contact: Contact program directors (brittany-bettendorf@uiowa.edu; katherine-i-harris@uiowa.edu; lauris-kaldjian@uiowa.edu) or coordinator (suzanne-streitz@uiowa.edu).